

Agency Information

AGENCY : FBI  
RECORD NUMBER : 124-10284-10121  
RECORD SERIES : HQ  
AGENCY FILE NUMBER : 100-30067-33, 34

Released under the John  
F. Kennedy  
Assassination Records  
Collection Act of 1992  
(44 USC 2107 Note).  
Case#:NW 53130 Date:  
05-31-2017

Document Information

ORIGINATOR : FBI  
FROM : KEHE, WILBERT H.  
TO : DIRECTOR, FBI

TITLE :

DATE : 12/13/1946  
PAGES : 16

SUBJECTS :

JOP, BKG, TRA, CP ACT, SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS A/O  
MEETING

DOCUMENT TYPE : PAPER, TEXTUAL DOCUMENT  
CLASSIFICATION : Unclassified  
RESTRICTIONS : 4  
CURRENT STATUS : Redact  
DATE OF LAST REVIEW : 01/07/1998

OPENING CRITERIA : INDEFINITE

COMMENTS : INC MEMO

Form No. 3

THIS CASE ORIGINATED AT **SAN FRANCISCO**

FILE NO. 100-1465

REPORT MADE AT: <b>SAN FRANCISCO</b>	DATE WHEN MADE: <b>12/13/46</b>	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE: <b>11/15, 18/46</b>	REPORT MADE BY: <b>WILBERT H. KEHE</b>	<b>JEH</b>
TITLE: <b>JOHN PITTMAN</b>			CHARACTER OF CASE: <b>INTERNAL SECURITY - C</b>	

## SUMMARY REPORT

Subject, JOHN PITTMAN, a negro, was born at Atlanta, Georgia, September 17, 1905. He married MERLE ENID NANCE at Seattle, Washington on July 18, 1938. They were divorced March 5, 1945. In 1936 Subject was a member of the American Federation of Government Employees, Lodge Number 291. Subject's wife formerly was employed as a stenographer for GLADSTEIN, GROSSMAN, MARGOLIS & SAWYER, Communist Law firm in San Francisco. Subject attended the College of Arts and Science, University of California, Berkeley, California, for six semesters.

APPROVED AND  
FORWARDED:
*Harry M. Kimball*  
 SPECIAL AGENT  
IN CHARGE

COPIES OF THIS REPORT FURNISHED TO:

- 5 - Bureau
- 3 - San Francisco

DO NOT WRITE IN THESE SPACES

RECORDED AND INDEXED:

RECORDED  
CHECKED OFF:

JACKETED:

BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
ROUTED TO: 100-1465

SF 100-1465

I.

Secretary of State  
State of California  
Sacramento, California

Subject JOHN PITTMAN was one of the sponsors for WALTER R. LAMBERT, 1942 Communist Party candidate for Congressman, and ANITA WHITNEY, Communist Party candidate for State Comptroller.

Registrar of Voters  
San Francisco County  
San Francisco, California

The records of the Registrar of Voters reflect that on September 24, 1938 and on September 16, 1939 Subject JOHN PITTMAN registered as affiliated with the Communist Party. In the registration PITTMAN registered as residing at 1403½ Montgomery Street, gave his occupation as that of a newspaperman, and stated that he was born in Georgia. In his registration of 1939 PITTMAN reflected that he was residing at 1028 Montgomery Street, gave his occupation as that of a reader, and stated that he was born in Georgia.

SF-939

Subject JOHN PITTMAN attended a special meeting of the Fillmore Branch of the Communist Party on May 12, 1943 at which time there was a discussion of the State Convention of the Communist Party. On August 30, 1943 PITTMAN spoke at a Communist Party meeting held at the Abraham Lincoln Victory Center, 1759 Fillmore Street, on the problems of negroes. PITTMAN in his speech stated that the negroes had always been discriminated against and were prevented from progressing to a normal and satisfactory manner of living.

On August 27, 1943 PITTMAN was the guest of honor at a party given by the Fillmore Branch of the Communist Party at the Abraham Lincoln Victory Center. In January, 1944 Subject was a member of one of the larger branches of the Communist Party in San Francisco and is known to have received instructions from LEO BAROWAY, Communist Party functionary, as to the line of propaganda PITTMAN was to use in the People's World Newspaper in dealing with the subject of farm consumers.

SF-296

While informant was a member of the Communist Party from September, 1936 to February, 1937, JOHN PITTMAN was a member of the Newspaper Guild faction of the Communist Party. Informant knew PITTMAN also as a member of the

SF 100-1465

staff of the People's World Newspaper, a Communist organ. Informant learned that Subject's wife, MERLE PITTMAN, resigned her position in the CIO in order to accept a position at the State Headquarters of the Communist Party, located at 121 Haight Street, San Francisco.

SF-517

On September 12, 1939 Pittman spoke under the auspices of Lodge No. 694, IWO, at 136 Valencia Street, San Francisco, on the subject of the German and Soviet Non-Aggression Pact. Informant also retains a copy of an article which appeared in the July, 1939 issue of the Fillmore Spotlight, published by the Twenty-Second Assembly District of the San Francisco Communist Party, advertising an open branch meeting of the Party scheduled for July 20, 1939 at 1732 O'Farrell Street. The article reported that PITTMAN would speak on the subject "The Negro Looks at 1940".

On March 20, 1940 PITTMAN lead a forum sponsored by the People's World on the topic "This Week Abroad", at the Sorosis Hall, 536 Sutter Street, San Francisco. On September 19, 1941 PITTMAN delivered an address at the Eagles' Hall, 273 Golden Gate Avenue, San Francisco, at a meeting held under the auspices of the People's World Forum. ELIZABETH GURLEY FLYNN, Secretary of the Citizens Committee to Free EARL BROWDER, and a nationally known Communist Party functionary, spoke on the same program.

SF-1159

On June 23, 1943 PITTMAN delivered an address on race riots before a joint meeting of the Fillmore Branch and Branch 6 of the Metal Trades Section of the Communist Party. PITTMAN alleged that the Detroit and Beaumont riots started at the same time, which proved that they were inspired by the Axis collaborators. He stated that the Communist Party policy was to demand protection for negroes and Mexicans from the police.

On April 6, 1944 PITTMAN made a speech on the organization and roll of the Communist Party at a meeting of one of the larger Communist Party groups in San Francisco. On November 17, 1944 PITTMAN made a report on the National election results at a meeting of the Fillmore Club of the Communist Party held at 1433 Divisadero Street, San Francisco.

On December 8, 1944 PITTMAN attended the San Francisco County Membership meeting of the CPA, at which meeting JOHN WILLIAMSON, National Vice President of the CPA, was the principal speaker. PITTMAN attended meetings of the Fillmore Club of the Communist Party at 1433 Divisadero Street and at 2031 Bush Street, on August 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 and October 4, 1945.

SF 100-1465

SF-1175

This source obtained a copy of a handbill which advertized a speech to be delivered by JOHN PITTMAN, Editor of the People's World Newspaper, on August 19, 1943 at 1402 Powell Street, San Francisco. The meeting was held under the auspices of the North Beach Branch of the Communist Party.

During 1943 PITTMAN is known to have received consideration by Communist Party officials as a possible candidate for the office of the Board of Supervisors in the San Francisco City elections. After some consideration, however, the Communist Party chose as its candidate OLETA O'CONNOR YATES, Executive Secretary of the Communist Party for San Francisco County.

PITTMAN participated as a speaker in the campaign of OLEDA O'CONNOR YATES, and in December, 1943 was selected to introduce Mrs. YATES over a San Francisco radio station on the anniversary of the Bill of Rights.

As of January 1, 1944 PITTMAN was a member of the North Beach Club of the Communist Party. On May 7, 1944 Subject was invited to and attended the Communist Party State Convention in San Francisco as a Fraternal delegate. During 1944 PITTMAN was a member of the San Francisco County Committee of the Communist Party and was a member of the California State Committee of the Communist Party. During the 1944 recruiting drive Subject pledged to recruit five new members into the Communist Party. At a general membership meeting of the San Francisco Communist Party during the latter part of March, 1944, PITTMAN spoke on the importance of the forthcoming visit of JAMES FORD, negro member of the National Committee of the Communist Party.

SF-980

At a meeting of one of the Communist Party branches in Berkeley, California, on April 13, 1944, JOHN PITTMAN made a speech in which he explained and praised Marxism. PITTMAN cited examples of great advances made in Russia under this system of Government and stated that the policy of the Communist Party in the United States as of that time was to cooperate one hundred percent with the United States Government because this Government had expressed the same views for economic freedom of the masses which the Communist Party had always advocated.

On August 19, 1945 PITTMAN attended the State Convention of the Communist Party at 1621 Market Street and made a speech on the work of the People's World Newspaper. During the course of his speech he asked that Communist Party Club discussions of the paper should continue as a permanent feature. In 1946 PITTMAN attended the Northern California Conference on Industrial Relations and was one of the speakers at this conference.

Source A

PITTMAN attended a large public meeting sponsored by the Communist Party of San Francisco during the latter part of April, 1944, at which time JAMES FORD, member of the National Committee of the Communist Party, was the principal speaker. PITTMAN was seated on the platform behind the speaker along with a select group of State and County Communist Party functionaries. He assisted in taking a collection at this meeting for the benefit of the Communist Party.

SF-595

In August, 1944, PITTMAN spoke at a meeting of the Richmond Victory Club on the subject "The Communist Movement Throughout the World".

SF-1409

On January 10, 1945 PITTMAN spoke on the subject "The Future of Germany" at a meeting of the Seamen's Group of the Communist Political Association. At a meeting of the Seamen's Club on July 25, 1945 at 1402 Powell Street, San Francisco, PITTMAN spoke on the history of the People's World as a mass organ of the Communist Party. He stated that WILLIAM SCHNEIDERMAN, HARRISON GEORGE, VERN SMITH and himself comprised an Editorial Committee which met every Friday to work out the Party line to be followed by the People's World Newspaper. At another meeting of the Seamen's Club on August 1, 1945, PITTMAN continued his speech regarding the work and purposes of the People's World Newspaper.

SF-1425

PITTMAN attended numerous meetings of the State Board of the Communist Party during 1944 and 1945. At a meeting of the State Board, at Communist Party Headquarters on November 10, 1945, PITTMAN advocated a drive to obtain one thousand new subscribers each month for the People's World. He asserted that the People's World had not previously been brought to the Communist Party as a political problem. At a meeting of the State Board on June 8, 1945 PITTMAN stated that the People's World editorial staff was made up of typical young Party members who were inexperienced in the Party, and further stated that the least political wise of these inexperienced people believed Revisionism constituted a crisis in the Communist Party.

At a State Board meeting on September 1, 1945 PITTMAN reported that the situation in the Fillmore Branch of the Communist Party was very bad. He suggested that the Party investigate the matter of JIM CROWISM in the Longshoremen's Union.

At a meeting of the State Executive Board on October 1, 1945 PITTMAN decried a trend toward white chauvinism in the Communist Party. On

SF 100-1465

Northern California Conference on Industrial Concentration and Press Building held at the Booker T. Washington Community Center. Subject gave a speech entitled "The Roll of the Marxist Press". On April 8, 1946 PITTMAN conducted a class on Marxism for the John Brown Branch of the Communist Party in the home of ETTA LARGENT, 1512 Lyon Street, San Francisco. On April 29, 1946 PITTMAN spoke at a meeting sponsored by the South San Francisco People's World readers at 200 Victory Avenue, South San Francisco.

SF-1198

On August 15, 1945 PITTMAN attended the State Convention of the Communist Party at 1621 Market Street, San Francisco. He made a speech at this convention concerning the work of the People's World and asked that Communist Party club discussions of the paper should continue as a permanent feature.

SF-568

On July 25, 1945 PITTMAN attended a meeting of the Seamen's Club at 1402 Powell Street, San Francisco.

SF-1442

On February 12, 1945 PITTMAN served as chairman of the Lincoln Memorial meeting held at 1750 Clay Street, San Francisco and sponsored by the Communist Political Association.

SF-1469

During 1946 PITTMAN attended the Northern California Conference on Industrial Relations in San Francisco and served as one of the speakers at the conference. The "Western Worker" of October 4, 1937 reported that PITTMAN had been elected as a member of the Executive Board of the San Francisco County Council Committee of the Communist Party. On October 11, 1940 the "Western Worker" reported that PITTMAN was a member of the Northern California Newspaper Guild and that he was active in organizing negroes in the trade union movement.

The People's World Newspaper on April 2, 1942 published an article by JOHN PITTMAN as Foreign Editor, in which he praised the morale of the Red Armies of the Union of Soviet Republics. The Oakland Tribune on July 13, 1943 reported that JOHN PITTMAN would be the guest speaker at a public meeting sponsored by the Berkeley Branches of the Communist Party at 1942 Shaddock Avenue.

The People's World Newspaper on July 23, 1943 publicized the fact that JOHN PITTMAN, Managing Editor of the People's World, would speak on Japan



SF 100-1465

SF-9

During a visit to New York in 1943 PITTMAN was entertained by PAUL ROBESON, negro singer, Communist Party supporter.

SF-1180

During the early part of April, 1944 JOHN PITTMAN and his wife entertained GREGORY KHEIFETS, Soviet Vice Consul, and Mrs. KHEIFETS at dinner, along with other guests.

SF-1301

During the Spring of 1944 JOHN PITTMAN and his wife entertained JOHN and KAY McTERNAN at dinner. The McTERNANS are well known members of the Communist Party in San Francisco.

SF-1332

During the early part of June, 1944 Subject and his wife entertained HERBERT RESNER, Communist Party attorney, for HARRY BRIDGES, at dinner at their home.

Source B

During the spring recruiting drive of the Communist Political Association in 1944 Subject JOHN PITTMAN recruited the following four persons into the CPA: JACK C. FORSTON, FRED MARTIN, CHARITY MARTIN, JOHN TERRY.

PITTMAN was transferred from the North Beach Club of the Communist Party to the Fillmore Club on April 19, 1944.

SF-1370

During 1944 PITTMAN was selected as one of the key Communists by Dr. MAX YERGAN, Secretary of the Council on African Affairs, to draw up plans and strategy in making suitable contacts, securing favorable publicity and proposals, and in his obtaining the support of the delegates attending the United Nations Conference for the Colonial program of the Council on African Affairs.

SF-1413

During 1945 JOHN PITTMAN appeared before the Leadership Review Committee of the Communist Party and signed a ten-page statement regarding his shortcomings as a leader in the Communist Party.



SF 100-1465

LA-3000

WILLIAM SCHNEIDERMAN furnished funds to JOHN PITTMAN upon his departure from San Francisco to accept a position with the Chicago "Defender". PITTMAN was allowed by the Secretary of the Party to approach a few of the comrades whom he knew personally for personal loans, and WILLIAM SCHNEIDERMAN is known to have stated that the Party felt it necessary to assist PITTMAN as much as possible.

- P E N D I N G -

- 12 -